# Board of Management
# Audit & Assurance Committee

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date of Meeting** | **Tuesday 11 June 2024** |
| **Paper No.** | **AAC4-H** |
| **Agenda Item** | **5.3** |
| **Subject of Paper** | **Business Continuity Desktop Exercise Report** |
| **FOISA Status** | **Disclosable** |
| **Primary Contact** | **Drew McGowan**<br>**Associate Director of Governance and Risk** |
| **Date of production** | **31 May 2024** |
| **Action** | **For Discussion and Decision** |

## 1.    Recommendations

1.1.    To discuss the findings and recommendations outlined in the report prepared by Ashton Resilience following the business continuity desktop exercise facilitated in May 2024.

## 2. Purpose

2.1. To present Ashton Resilience's findings and recommendations following the recent business continuity exercise undertaken at the College.

## 3. Consultation

3.1. The draft report was shared with the Depute Principal & Chief Operating Officer, Associate Director of Governance & Risk and Compliance Auditor for feedback. The final report is shared with the Senior Management Team and the Audit & Assurance Committee for review.

## 4. Key Insights

4.1. Ashton Resilience and the Associate Director of Governance & Risk facilitated a desktop exercise with senior staff in May 2024 to support the College's business continuity and incident management preparedness. The scenario involved an explosion at the City campus which had a significant impact on the College's estate, operations, students and staff – and required a response over several days and weeks.

4.2. The report highlights that "the team responded well to the given scenario and considered many different aspects of the response that were required" and recognised the "high level of commitment by the College to business continuity planning and incident management".

4.3. Based on the observations of Ashton Resilience, and the feedback of participants, several recommendations are outlined in the report to improve the College's preparedness. The recommendations – covering documentation, planning, team structure, communications, training and awareness – will be implemented in the 2024-25 academic year as part of the previously planned review of business continuity. SMART actions will be agreed with the Compliance Auditor and progress will be reported to the Audit & Assurance Committee along with internal audit actions.

## 5. Impact and Implications

5.1. There are events and incidents that by sheer accident, or by concerted effort and design, threaten to disrupt the College's work or breach our security. The protection of life, security of our physical/digital infrastructure and maintenance of communication channels with key stakeholders are of paramount importance to the College.

5.2. It is therefore essential that effective measures are in place at all times, and continuously reviewed and improved where necessary, to ensure the College is prepared to prevent, manage, and recover from these incidents. Testing our preparedness, training staff and identifying areas for development is key to this work.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1:** City of Glasgow College Business Continuity Exercise Report 2023-24

REPORT FOR

# CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY**
**EXERCISE**

**EXERCISE DATE: 10TH MAY 2024**

| Project Name: | COGC04 – Business Continuity Exercise | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Document Name: | Report | | |
| Version Control: | Version | Date | Change |
| | 0.1 | 27/05/2024 | Draft version for review |
| | 1.0 | 30/05/2024 | Final version: minor amendments made to some of the recommendations based on feedback received |
| | | | |
| Author: | Chris Lintern, Ashton Resilience | | |
| Distribution: | Sheila Lodge, Depute Principal, City of Glasgow College<br>Drew McGowan, Associate Director of Governance and Risk, City of Glasgow College | | |

**CONTENTS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Chris Lintern from Ashton Resilience conducted a business continuity desktop walkthrough exercise at City of Glasgow College (COGC) on 10th May 2024. Chris has previously worked at the College on projects which have included development of Business Recovery Plans for each Faculty and Professional Service, and work with the IT team on their Disaster Recovery arrangements.

The scenario involved an explosion, which was possibly caused deliberately, at the College's City Campus. It provided an opportunity to consider how the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Senior Management Team (SMT) representatives would consider their response as the Business Continuity Team.

Participants were asked to work through the College Incident Management / Business Continuity Plan (subsequently referred to in this report as the Incident Management Plan) and to refer to the Faculty / Professional Service Business Recovery Plans.

For the purpose of the desktop walkthrough, both the Principal and Depute Principal were unavailable to lead the team, although both were in attendance to observe the exercise.

Following the exercise, a debrief was held, led by the Principal, where several comments were raised relating to the response. Some colleagues also provided feedback after the session. Key comments have been included within the Observations and Recommendations section of this report below.

There are three high priority recommendations which focus on updating the Incident Management Plan, identifying roles and responsibilities for the Business Continuity Team, and considering emergency notifications to staff and students in a major incident.

The team responded well to the given scenario and considered many different aspects of the response that were required. The number of attendees and their seniority demonstrates a high level of commitment by the College to business continuity planning and incident management.


**EXERCISE ASSESSMENT**

**Achievement of Objectives**

The original objectives of the exercise, as well as an assessment of the extent to which these objectives were achieved, are set out in the table below.

| Objective | Achieved? |
|---|---|
| To provide attendees with background on incident management and business continuity planning. | Yes |
| To provide members of the College's Senior Management Team with an opportunity to practice and understand their roles during a major incident in a safe and supportive environment. | Yes |
| Understand the effectiveness of the plans, processes and procedures that would be implemented during a major incident. | Yes |
| Identify any gaps or areas to improve business continuity and incident management arrangements. | Yes |

**OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations have been made to identify how the College can improve its response to a major incident. These include feedback from participants raised during the post-exercise debrief. Observations and recommendations have been separated into distinct categories for consideration by management.

**Prioritisation of Recommendations**

The table below contains a high-level representation of the priority which should be attached to the recommendations contained within this report; the code is included within the table in the same column as the reference number.

| Code | Priority | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| H | High | This recommendation directly affects the College's ability to respond to an incident.<br>Address first. |
| M | Medium | Failure to address the recommendation may diminish the College's ability to respond to an incident.<br>Address next. |
| L | Low | This recommendation impacts the ability of the College to manage and maintain the overall effectiveness of incident management.<br>Address last. |
| Q | Quick win | This recommendation may not have a high importance but, in our opinion, can be addressed easily and will add to the overall improvement of incident management.<br>Address as time and resources allow. |

**Detailed Observations and Recommendations**

Team Structure

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 1<br>(H) | The existing Incident Management Plan does not define specific roles for the team to fulfil as part of managing a major incident or emergency. Including action plans for each member of the team and identifying roles for team members provides clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities. | • Review and update the College's Incident Management Plan, as planned, and identify key roles for team members. Include a primary and deputy role-holder for each role.<br>• Include action plans for each role on the team within the plan. |
| 2<br>(M) | Ensuring actions and decisions are clearly documented as part of the College's response to a major incident is of vital importance (for example as part of an insurance claim or investigation). The Associate Director of Governance and Risk fulfilled this role during the exercise, but in his absence it is not clear who would deputise. | • Confirm the Associate Director of Governance and Risk and the Chief of Staff as colleagues who could undertake the role of Secretariat / Loggist.<br>• Identify potential deputies if they were unavailable and consider whether there are any training |

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|-----|-------------|----------------|
|  | This role may benefit from more than one colleague (for example one person capturing the minutes of meetings, and a second person updating a status board for the team's reference). In addition to the Associate Director of Governance and Risk, this role could be fulfilled by the Chief of Staff. | requirements to ensure that they can fulfil the role. |

Incident Management Documentation

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|-----|-------------|----------------|
| 3 (H) | The current Incident Management Plan contains a significant amount of information but could be structured in a way which would make it easier for the Business Continuity Team to use during a major incident. <br><br> This feedback was received from several participants during the debrief, and was highlighted by the Associate Director of Governance and Risk ahead of the desktop exercise. | Review the current Incident Management Plan, as planned, and update to ensure that the Business Continuity Team can use the documentation more easily in the event of a major incident. |
| 4 (Q) | The role of 'Person in Charge' (PIC) was referenced several times during the exercise. This is a role shared across the Senior Management Team on a rota which has specific responsibilities as part of any emergency situation. <br><br> The PIC is not referenced within the Incident Management Plan but is a key role in a major incident, and therefore should be documented as part of the incident response. | Include the role of the PIC within the Incident Management Plan (or cross-reference to existing documented procedures for the PIC if these are in place). |

Communication and Coordination

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|-----|-------------|----------------|
| 5 (L) | The existing Incident Management Plan identifies potential Incident Control Rooms for the Business Continuity Team at both the City (Executive Office / Level 6 meeting rooms) and Riverside (Corporate Suite on Level 7) Campuses. <br><br> Incident Control Rooms should have the information and facilities needed for the team to effectively manage the incident. | <ul><li>Confirm the Incident Control Rooms for each Campus.</li><li>Ensure that each room contains current copies of the relevant plans and any other equipment needed for the team to manage a major incident.</li></ul> |
| 6 (L) | During the debrief, colleagues felt that it may be beneficial to include a key stakeholder list within the plan (this would be a College-wide | Include a key stakeholder list within the updated Incident Management Plan (see Recommendation #3). |

| | list and link to the stakeholders identified within the Business Recovery Plans). Reviewing and updating the stakeholder list during incident response would ensure the Business Continuity Team identify any additional messages or communications that need to be disseminated. | |
|---|---|---|

Training and Awareness

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 7 (M) | This was the first desktop walkthrough exercise at the College for several years which tested its Business Continuity and Recovery Plans. Regular exercising provides an opportunity to ensure that roles and responsibilities in the event of a major incident are clearly understood. | Ensure that the College's response to a major incident is exercised on a regular basis (at least annually). |
| 8 (Q) | All colleagues should understand how a major incident would be managed at the College and how they would be kept updated with information. This provides clarity and reassurance in what can often be uncertain and unsettling times for colleagues. | Provide information to colleagues around the management of major incidents and who they should contact for further information. This could for example be put on the College intranet or disseminated through internal communications. |

Business Continuity Planning

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 9 (H) | The exercise provided an opportunity to consider how staff and students would be notified in the event of a major incident. These requirements are likely to be more formally required once the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill progresses through the UK Parliament. | • Consider the ways of contacting staff and students during a major incident at present, and evaluate how effective these would be in the event of needing to provide emergency information and checking on the wellbeing of staff and students.<br>• Depending on the outcome of the above, evaluate the benefit of implementing an emergency management notification system. |
| 10 (M) | The exercise provided an opportunity to consider the options available for the use of specialist space if College buildings were unavailable for a prolonged period.<br><br>It was clear during the exercise that a variety of options may be available depending on co-operation from other Colleges or organisations. These options should continue | As part of the annual review and update of the College's Business Recovery Plans, the following should be undertaken:<br>• Continue to review the options available for specialist space within and outside of the College.<br>• Discuss potential reciprocal arrangements with other institutions to understand availability and |

| No. | Observation | Recommendation |
|-----|-------------|----------------|
|  | to be part of the annual review and update of Faculty Business Recovery Plans. | timeframes of specialist spaces (note this may change at different times during the year).<br><br>• Continue to liaise with Colleges and other institutions in and around the College's region to agree and maintain agreements in the event of a major incident.<br><br>• Update the Business Recovery Plans with information in relation to specialist space as appropriate. |

**APPENDIX ONE – PARTICIPANTS**

| Name | Role |
|------|------|
| Claire Carney | Vice Principal Student Experience |
| Andrew Dickson | Chief Financial Officer |
| Roy Gardner | Vice Principal Corporate Development |
| John Gribben | Vice Principal People & Corporate Support |
| Claire Gallacher | Chief of Staff |
| Scott Renton | Director of IT |
| Laura Shields | Financial Controller |
| Carla Gethin | Director of Business and Partnerships |
| Jon Gray | Director of Excellence |
| Alison Bell | Faculty Dean |
| Siobhan Wilson | Faculty Dean |
| Will McLeish | Director of Communication |
| Michael Cross | Director of Corporate Support |
| Chris Khan | Faculty Business Manager (Deputising for Gus Grubb, Faculty Dean) |
| Penny Robertson | Libraries Manager (Deputising for Derek Robertson, Director of Student Experience) |

**Facilitator (Ashton Resilience):** Chris Lintern
**Facilitator (City of Glasgow College):** Drew McGowan (Associate Director of Governance & Risk)
**Observers (City of Glasgow College):** Paul Little (Principal), Sheila Lodge (Depute Principal)